

# Virginia Emergency Operations Center (VEOC)

Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM)

## 2007 DROUGHT AND BURN BAN SITUATION REPORT # 14 24 January 2008, 1400 Hours

*New Information in Bold Italic Type*

### SUMMARY

Statewide precipitation for the previous water year (1 October 2006 through 30 September 2007) was below normal. ***Statewide precipitation for the period from October 1, 2006 until January 17, 2008 was below normal and statewide precipitation in each successive shorter time period is below normal. Statewide precipitation for the period from January 1, 2008 to January 17, 2008 is 52% of normal. Precipitation greater than 85% of normal is considered to be in the normal range.***

### EXECUTIVE ACTION

**EOC Activation:** The Virginia Emergency Operations Center is at Routine status and is operating with normal staff.

**State of Emergency:** Governor Timothy M. Kaine declared a Statewide Emergency on 18 October 2007 and imposed a statewide ban on all open burning. The statewide ban on open burning was lifted by Governor Timothy M. Kaine on 15 November. The Statewide Emergency remains in effect to deal with potential or actual drought related issues.

Governor Kaine requested that the Secretary of the US Department of Agriculture declare Virginia a statewide disaster area due to reductions in farm production caused by drought and high temperatures in 2007. The Acting US Secretary of Agriculture designated 78 additional counties and 34 independent cities as primary natural disaster areas on 18 October 2007 due to reductions in farm production caused by drought and high temperatures that occurred from January 1, 2007, and continuing.

Governor Kaine sent a letter to all localities dated 29 November 2007 advising them that the most effective water restrictions are those developed at the local level and asked that localities review their drought water conservation and contingency plans associated with public waterworks and if there was no current drought plan, one should be developed. Governor Kaine also asked localities to review their local ordinances requiring mandatory non-essential water use restrictions during declared emergencies and assure that the ordinances are consistent with the Virginia Drought Assessment and Response Plan and if the locality has not adopted such ordinances, they should consider the development and adoption of these. DEQ – [COV Drought Response Plan](#)

**Executive Order:** [Executive Order 57 \(2007\)](#)

### WEATHER FORECAST

**Southwest VA – Thursday, 24 Jan:** *Mostly cloudy with 50% chance of snow showers; high temperatures in the low to upper 30's; west winds 15 to 25 MPH with gusts up to 40 in the afternoon with wind chill values 10 above. Thursday night: Mostly cloudy to partly cloudy with a 40% chance of snow showers during the evening; low temperatures in the low to mid teens; northwest winds 10 to 20 MPH with gusts up to 35 MPH with wind chill values 3 above. Friday, 25 Jan: Sunny; high temperatures in the mid to upper 30's; light and variable winds. Friday night:*

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*Mostly cloudy; 20% chance of snow after midnight; low temperatures in the low to mid 20's; light and variable winds.*

### OPERATIONS SECTION

**ESF 5 – Emergency Management:** Posting event related items to WebEOC under event titled “WebEOC, 2007-10 Drought and Burn Ban”; Participating as member of the Drought Monitoring Task Force; monitoring weather, river flow and precipitation reports; assessing the impact across the Commonwealth; limited exemption of hours worked for hay and feed carriers was extended until 0600 hours, 15 April 2008. VDEM Operations Director, Harry Colestock, and VDEM Recovery and Mitigation Director, George Roarty, attended a North Carolina Emergency Management Forum in Asheville, North Carolina, that discussed the drought in the Southeastern US. Points discussed for North Carolina were:

- Description of a tiered system to identify water systems vulnerability to drought and a group of functional state task forces to address specific drought issues
- State actions included water basin meetings, tracking of public water system status and promotion of conservation (especially industries and big users).
- In agriculture, state identified need for 800,000 round hay bales for livestock; Tobacco Trust Fund allocated \$500,000 for transport of bales with grant applications used to determine eligibility of farmers; corporate and faith-based financial donations were collected to set up financial assistance programs for farmers. \$3.5 million made available by Governor to pay for hay-hauling.
- Legislature looking at possibility of inter-basin water transfers
- NC Governor Easley Press Release issued on 14 January detailed new actions to combat the drought.
  - Governor told the state's 30 most vulnerable communities that they need to take actions now to ensure adequate water during the potential summer drought
  - Governor directed his Dept of Natural Resources to quickly identify the funding needed to make sure undue amounts of water are not being lost to leaks and other structural problems
  - Governor also requested that public water systems adopt conservation-based rate structures to encourage both residential and commercial customers to save water
- Other State reports
  - South Carolina – 44 Of 46 counties in severe drought designation; no plan as of yet; looking at basin-based plan; voluntary conservation efforts have become less effective over time; trying to determine triggers for action
  - Georgia – experiencing 2 year drought with lots of politics involved; Lake Lanier supplies 5 million people and run by US Army Corps of Engineers; FEMA Emergency Declaration requested and state is tracking cost; use a tiered system similar to NC; looking at contingency of 1 gallon/person/day for planning purposes
  - Alabama – no plan and looking to learn from other states
- Virginia's plans and current efforts were discussed and included background of recent droughts, development of the Virginia Drought Assessment and Response Plan, current drought impacts, Governor's Emergency Declaration, resources in readiness, water system problems exacerbated by drought and potential funding and other resources to mitigate the impacts of the drought situation. [Limited Exemption of Hours Worked for Hay and Feed Carriers](#)

**State Warning Point:** Normal operations

**Local Liaison:** VDEM Regional Coordinators are monitoring drought impacts to localities in their region. VDEM Region Four Coordinator attended the monthly water planning/drought issues meeting at the Lenowisco Planning District Commission in Scott County on 15 January and provided the following report:

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- Town of Appalachia – successfully pumping water from the Powell River; applying for Rural Development Grant funding to make temporary pump system permanent; costs so far are approximately \$99,000 not including town labor or equipment use; electricity use by pump station cost approximately \$3200 per month
- City of Norton – 100 day supply; decreased purchases from Wise Public Service Authority to 20% of need
- Lee County Public Service Authority – floating intake in reservoir is being constructed; secondary site at Blue Springs is stable
- Town of Dungannon – accountability in November 2007 was 50%; December figures not yet available; using \$20,000 of Planning District Commission funding to buy meters to aid in leak detection

### **EMERGENCY SERVICES BRANCH**

**ESF 4 – Firefighting:** *The Virginia Department of Forestry reports that through January 17th, the agency has responded to 32 fires which have burned 294 acres. This activity is above average for this time of year and indicative of the drier than normal conditions across the Commonwealth. Officials remain concerned about how current conditions may impact wildfire potential during the month of February and what that may mean for Virginia's spring wildfire season. All indications are that the Commonwealth will experience a higher than normal number of fires this spring and the agency is ready to respond as necessary. The Department of Forestry also reports concern over secondary drought effects such as a continued upward trend for forest pest outbreaks such as Gypsy Moth and Southern Pine Beetle and also concerns with higher than normal tree seedling mortality following the spring planting season. More than 18 million seedlings are planted in Virginia each year and poor survival as a result of extended dry conditions can create major economic impacts lasting for many years.* Even though the Statewide Ban on Open Burning has been lifted, VA Department of Forestry advises that several localities have implemented their own ban on burning and residents should check with their locality prior to conducting any open burning. [Local Burn Ban Restrictions](#)

**ESF 8 – Public Health & Medical Services:** Virginia Department of Health and Office of Drinking Water continue to monitor and stand by for consultation and coordination.

### **HUMAN SERVICES BRANCH**

**ESF 11 – Agriculture and Natural Resources:** *Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services reports that according to the USDA crop weather report released on January 7, 2008, topsoil moisture was adequate. Producers are concerned about low subsoil moisture and the dry trend does not help prospects for the 2008 growing season. Hay is still short in supply and farmers continue to struggle with the shift in economics coming from skyrocketing values for hay and fertilizer. Snow and ice early in December forced livestock producers to suspend pasture grazing their livestock for about a week. Feed supplies for livestock continue to be tight as stored feed is being depleted and could be non-existent by spring if these supplies are not purchased soon.* As a result of the hay shortages caused by the 2007 drought, the Virginia Tobacco Indemnification and Community Revitalization Commission has allocated \$500,000.00 to livestock producers in the Southwest Virginia counties of Bland, Buchanan, Carroll, Dickenson, Grayson, Lee, Scott, Smyth, Tazewell, Washington, Wise, and Wythe. All Virginia localities have access to federal drought disaster assistance. [VDACS Drought Related Information](#); [VDACS Hay Clearing House](#)

*The Department of Game and Inland Fisheries reports no significant change in the past month in stream flows or reservoir levels related to recreational activities. Recreation has been impacted minimally however due to the limited seasonal demand. All boat access ramps are open in spite of the lower water levels. Stocking of trout continues on schedule. The trout raised in Department facilities are smaller than average due to the*

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*prolonged drought. Significant winter/spring precipitation events are needed to provide adequate recreational opportunity and aquatic habitat during the spring fishing and fish spawning period.*

### INFRASTRUCTURE SUPPORT BRANCH

**ESF 1 – Transportation:** The Virginia Department of Transportation and the Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles jointly authorized a temporary waiver of registration and license requirements along with normal weight and width restrictions for the purpose of ensuring essential emergency relief supplies reach the disaster area in a timely manner. [Waiver to Carriers Specifically Transporting Hay and Feed Products within the Commonwealth](#)

**ESF 3 – Public Works & Engineering:** The Virginia Department of Health has not reported any impacts to public water supplies that have compromised their ability to provide the needs of their customers. **44** systems have initiated water conservation measures; **13** mandatory water conservation requirements and 31 voluntary water conservation requirements. ***The reduction in conservation requirements is likely reflective of decrease water demands during the winter season and is down from a high of 64 systems in November 2007.***

Drought conditions have remained relatively stable over the Commonwealth during the last month. Areas of exceptional drought in southwest Virginia have improved one drought category and are now rated as extreme drought. ***The intensity of drought impacts has continued to decline during the last month due to the end of the active growing season. Current moisture deficits coupled with a dry winter could result in significant drought impacts across all socio-economic sectors in the spring of 2008.*** [US Drought Monitor - VA: US Seasonal Drought Outlook](#)

Waterworks are encouraged to develop water conservation and contingency plans and local governments are encouraged to adopt local water conservation ordinances. [DEQ Water Conservation Tips](#)

DEQ chairs the Drought Monitoring Task Force and is conducting monthly conference calls to monitor the drought impact and issues a monthly drought report. [DMTF Report December 2007](#)

### PLANNING SECTION

**Situation/Documentation Unit:** Preparing and distributing weekly Situation Reports, monitoring WebEOC entries and maintaining situational awareness. ***Next Situation Report will be issued Thursday, 31 January 2008.***

### LOCAL ACTIVITIES

Wise County declared a local emergency on 31 October due to drought conditions that have caused a severe raw water supply shortage to retail water customers in Wise County. The Mayor and Town Council of Appalachia along with Wise County declared a water emergency and implemented conservation measures and prohibited non-essential water usage. An Emergency Virginia Water Permit was issued by the VA Department of Environmental Quality that permits withdrawal of 500,000 gallons per day from the Powell River and pumps it to their reservoir. The permit is valid for one year, however, if mandatory water conservation measures cease, the permit is invalid. Towns of Appalachia and Big Stone Gap are working on an interconnecting pipe with an estimated cost of \$500,000.

The Town of Dungannon and Scott County declared a local emergency on 9 November due to a water infrastructure issue involving the Town of Dungannon water system. The Virginia Rural Water Association has loaned leak detection equipment and staff to assist with leak detection operations that are on-going. The water tank is averaging around 29 feet of water and has a

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capacity of 39 feet. Prior repair of leaks have allowed the system to hold its own. The boil water notice remains in effect.

Lee County reported to the VDEM Region 4 Coordinator that at their current rate of water usage they would be out of water within 30 days. Lee County has not declared a local emergency and has not requested any official assistance at this time. The intake pipe at KVS Quarry needs to be relocated to deeper water. VDEM Recovery and Mitigation is assisting with contacts for possible funding sources to provide financial assistance in relocation of the intake pipe. Lee County has a contract with the Arthur-Shawnee System in Tennessee as an alternate source of water. Lee County is working on an agreement with the Town of Jonesville as an alternate source of water.

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